

Subject: TAKA MICHINOKU! and THE GREAT SASUKE! finally have that great match they've been trying to have for three years. HOSHIKAWA! German suplexes the hell out of FUNAKI! OHTANI! ain't Kawada. and other stuff I saw and read this week.

ALOHA~!

WELCOME TO THE LOST DEATH VALLEY DRIVER VIDEO REVIEW #57!

Thanks to all of you who e-mailed wondering where #57 was. As you can tell by my previous unforgivably wrongheaded praise of Jeff Jarrett and Tommy Dreamer, that deep down, I'm really an idiot who can't remember what number comes after the number 56. This baby is gonna be about my bizarre trip to Cheetahville (Washington DC to you geographically challenged) and the Glenn tape I finally got to start watching today.

I drove down to Phil's party palace to watch the new Glenn tape with Phil and Phil and the Hot, Minky Dark Cheetah. I grabbed the wrong tapes before I made the two hour trip so you can imagine my chagrin when I arrived and made the realization that all we had that Phil hadn't seen before was a 1994 AAA tape that I had accidentally picked up. That being a very vintage year of Lucha, we chalked it up to the gods wanting us to watch Lucha in concordance with it being the Mexican Day of the Dead or something. We made crass jokes during the Tony Arce vs Heavy Metal hair-vs-hair match about Heavy Metal picking the Destructore with the least amount of two-headed spiders on him, all on the way to seeing the most disturbing image in wrestling ever- three Payositos- who are evil midget clowns- forcing an opposing mini into a headstand position, while forcing the other mini's head into the headstanding mini's crotch-region for a David Lynch-inspired submission. Phil the Ripper and I decide that this was far too Tony Pena-joke-inspiring and way too psychosexually disturbing to ever see again. Phil S decides that this is the greatest mini's match he's ever seen and the bizarro submission adds to the overall weirdness of the match. Luckily, Cheetah arrives soon afterwards after kicking all kinds of ass at Tae Kwon Do class (SEND FOUR DOLLARS IN COIN OR STAMPS TO GET A TOTAL TRANSCRIPT OF THE TOTALLY JUVENILE JOKE ABOUT DUGGAN, THE LORD OF THE RING RING, AND HIDEOUS PARTS OF OL HACKSAW'S ANATOMY. Cheetah set me up for it! I swear!..)) WE're all hungry as all getout, so we go to Boeeymongers and have fabulous sammiches- where all three of them start busting on what a load of pudge I've become in my old age, this after they are done making light of my unglamorous car, a truly functional Reliant that was red at one time. Cheetah is a cruel and hard leader and the two punks we are with aren't helping any.:) I weep deeply into my Reuben.:p We watch a batch of MP that Cheetah hadn't seen yet so we reveled in the glory of MEN'S TEIOH. Phil the Ripper and Cheetah had to leave so we watched the Benoit/Finlay match from Nitro and bid adieu to our lovely leader and Phil- the tall owner of the world's most uninspectable car.:) Me and Phil watch Saturday Night and are amazed that they had the Benoit/Finlay rematch and that it kicked more ass than the first one on Nitro. Happily, I travel back to Richmond and get the tape that I forgot that morning.

@#@@#@#@@#@# NEW JAPAN TV 10/4/97 (taped 9/17 from Maishima Arena)

Takaiwa vs El Samurai: This was really neat but flawed beyond belief by the incredibly bad selling by the usually reliable Ohtani. The basic match is that Takaiwa is using every power move in his arsenal to kill Ohtani- and it's pretty splendid while he is trying. Takaiwa hits two regular Death Valley Drivers, One Death Valley Driver out of an Endless Powerbomb and one PHAT-ASS toprope Death Valley Driver, with Ohtani getting in his shots here and there and barely getting out of the merciless onslaught. Everything is fine until after the Toprope DVD, when Takaiwa gets positions Ohtani's lifeless body for a toprope Doctor Bomb, which Ohtani manages to turn into a hurricanrana. At this point, after four Death Valley Drivers, one out of an Endless powerbomb, and another off the toprope- Ohtani hits a springboard dropkick and then SPRINTS across the ring to hit a Springboard leg-lariat, and he then SPRINTS again to the other side of the ring to hit a springboard DDT all after being ripped to shreds by the up-and-coming Takaiwa. This was as crappy as the end to that Kyoko/Takako match a couple of months back. Luckily, Ohtani redeems himself on the show later.

Liger/ Ka Shin vs Otani/ Kanemoto: This was pretty cool, for the simple fact that Ka Shin actually wrestled like Ishizawa this time, as opposed to a third tier BattlARTS rookie like he did in that horrible match he had against Yamazaki. Kanemoto and Ohtani decide to have a contest to see who is true Biggest Dick in the League Of Penises Young Punk Stable. Kanemoto wins in a walk but Ohtani was great in this one, not crying once, selling like a king when Ka Shin was working over his leg- even doing the comical attempted tag to Liger, in a bizarre freudian slip- and looking like a man who is devastating enough on offense to be worthy of the titles and the belt ladies. Kanemoto punks the hell out of Ka Shin and pulls him up after having him pinning position after he and Ohtani had pummeled him beyond recognition. Liger and Kanemoto in the ring together is freaking magic and they need to heat this baby up and make a match between Liger and Koji where EVEN MORE HATRED is involved. Ka Shin hits a CHOICE rolling Cross-Armbreaker after Ohtani misses a lariat, and escapes in time to polish the latest codger protege off with a Dragon Suplex. I dug this.

Sasaki/ Yamazaki/ Hirata vs Chono/ Bagwell/ NWO Sting: BUFF is so AWESOME and this match seals it. Yamazaki hits BUFF with kicks that would have any other pansy-assed Heavyweight in WCW crying like a pantywaiste as he ran to the airport. BUFFS takes it like a man and STILL has enough left to be the ultimate heat machine, actually turning the tide of the match by posing in front the hot-headed Yamazaki and Sasaki, thus allowing Chono and Bagwell to beat the shit out of Hirata. He even gets in a neat BlockBuster. nWo Sting kicks ass and this is a good match.

Muta/ Tenzan vs Fujinami/ Nogami: Tenzan continues his bizarre trend of not sucking lately, but this is neither the time nor the match to waste his limited amount of decent match attempts. HEY! Muta with the mist. Muta yells anti-NEW JAPAN slogans in English as he stalks past the paparazzi.

Hashimoto/ Yasuda vs Kojima/ Nakanishi: This was pretty okay. Nakanishi isn't gonna kill a match and Kojima is a good enough worker. The key is that the arsenal-less Yasuda has his second decent performance in as many matches I've seen him in. Could Pete Stein be onto

something?:) Yasuda hits a really good Liger bomb and the young future of NJ loses to the old geezer. Hash is delighted, which is just WEIRD to see.

@%@@%@@%@@%@ MICHINOKU PRO CHAMP FORUM 10/18/97 (taped 10/10 from Ryogoku)

Satoru Sayama vs El Satanico was on this. I'm going to watch this match when I finally watch every last second of unwatched tape that I own. And even then, I'm going to turn the sound down.

The Undertaker vs Hakushi: HOLY CRAP! did this SUCK! This was the slowest Undertaker match I've ever seen, and he still works circles around the AMAZINGLY listless Shinzaki. Worst Match of the Year Candidate if there ever was one. But don't blame UT for this one.

Super Delfin/ Hoshikawa/Yakushiji vs Dick TOGO/ MEN'S TEIOH/ Funaki: OHHH MAN! Is this GREAT! MEN'S has a newer, even more-macking Fur coat and he is full of piss and vinegar as he taunts Delfin about taking the NWA Welterweight (of something) belt from him. Togo has new white with blue trim pants and also gives Delfin a ration of shit for being such boot-licking pansy as of late. Delfin is juiced to the gills and looking for an ass to kick. I'm glad the sweeeet steroids didn't affect his ability to be fast as living shit. Hoshikawa is quickly becoming my favorite face in the doomed promotion. He hits the SWANKEST suplexes on earth and hit two royal German Suplexes that looked totally unsurvivable. This breaks down to a total Lucha Libre free-for-all with the camera missing the out of ring from in the ring hurricanrana by Yakushiji (JUST LIKE ON GALAVISION!). Delfin and Togo in together is great since the world's weirdest angle create the world's largest mountain of heat. Funaki is dressed like the bass player for Adam and The Ants and has new dreadlocks. There is so much to love in this match, but I love the Hoshikawa parts the most. GET ALLLLL THIS!

Great Sasuke vs TAKA: HEY! HEY! They finally figured out how to have a great match together, and it only took TAKA going to Mexico and joining the WWF to pull it off. This match is 32 minutes long and includes every highspot imaginable and every counter to every highspot imaginable. The story is great. TAKA comes in the airport with a RAW is WAR t-shirt accompanied by Victor Quinones who is sporting an Austin 3:16 shirt. TAKA, from the start of the match, is the hugest prick this side of Koji Kanemoto- a facet I've missed about TAKA since he came to America and is kind to old people and children (as they say in the Gamera movies). TAKA beats the holy crap out of Sasuke for the first fifteen minutes after the prerequisite cavalcade of tope con hilos, and asai moonsaults which led to some perfunctory matwork where TAKA dumbed it down for Sasuke enough for Sasuke not to get smoked too bad by the BattlARTS and Pancrase vet. The pinnacle of TAKA's offense is his CRUSHING springboard moonsault to the floor. This was possibly his coolest ever. Sasuke fights like a champ and makes the comeback from the horrible beating seem legit. The other fabulous part of the match was TAKA using a bunch of WWF finishers- the Stone Cold Stunner and the Sharpshooter actually. This match has everything. I really dug it the most.

%^%^%^%^FROM PARTS UNKNOWN- wrestling mask and related stuff fanzine.

Well this was cooler than cool. Phil had the only non-newsletter issue that they published, though they mention another much larger 64-page extravaganza coming out last month, and it's pretty neat. Not a wrestling fanzine per se (HEY! LATIN!) but more of a pop culture mag with a singular fascination with Lucha Libre masks, toys, El Santo films, etc. It was nice to read about wrestling without hearing the word "workrate" or hear the phrase "pop a big house." This was pretty hip, and it has my favorite rating ever for anything- "El Santo vs the Vampire Women- a million billion stars." It had an interview with Los Straitjackets (the band with the cool masks but who get smoked like cheap cigar when it comes to surf bands by Man Or Astro-Man) who I saw at the Moondance last year here in Richmond. There is a fabulous guide to the more seminal El Santo movies, the story on the CMLL toys that infiltrated everyones dollar stores and- in the FROM PARTS UNKNOWN-cito, the newsletter- they tackle the Koji Kanemoto problem in regards to his hatred of cool masks. These are guys after my own heart for the most part (though they liked TigerKing vs Koboyashi, for some reason), and I look forward to seeing whatever else they churn out.

NEXT WEEK: LUCHA BABY! LIBRE BABY! LUCHA LIBRE BABY! J'd! That MinamiToyota/Ito match and the Toyota/Hotta match and the Cage match featuring Shimoda's tiny pants WOOOO-HOOOO! Hopefully, the Director's cut of Barnett's Lucha Loonies 4! WHOMP ASS!

NANIWA~!

Dean Rasmussen, Still recovering from TAKA's springboard moonsault onto Sasuke.